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Sochi Conference Threatens Syria Peace Process: Joint Statement by Syrian Civil Society

Russia has announced that it will host a “Syrian Congress on National Dialogue” in Sochi. The undersigned organizations believe that such a Conference would not allow meaningful representation and participation for all Syrians, and poses a serious threat to the potential for any viable peace process in Syria.

The signatories recognize the need for a fair and credible national dialogue process. However, the proposed “Syrian Congress on National Dialogue” is neither fair nor credible. It will instead only further undermine the Geneva Peace Process and all relevant UN Security Council resolutions, including Security Council resolution 2254.

Russia’s military intervention in Syria and its repeated use of the veto at the United Nations Security Council makes Russia a party to the conflict. Given its actions in Syria, Russia cannot be regarded as either a neutral mediator nor a fair convener for a national dialogue process. The only process that is legitimate or credible is the UN-led process.

Syrian Civil Society acknowledges that the Geneva Process has many flaws, yet it remains the only legitimate political track and the only one perceived as neutral by the Syrian people. It is critical that the UN continue to reaffirm the primacy of Security Council resolution 2254, which established a clear sequencing for a credible political process, starting with political transition, followed by a constitutional referendum and free and fair elections. The Sochi Conference undermines the primacy of UN Security Council resolution 2254 and the UN-led peace process and risks providing legitimacy to the Assad regime. Any participation by the UN Special Envoy for Syria, Mr. Staffan de Mistura, in the Sochi Conference represents a dangerous departure from the UN-led Geneva process.

Any successful peace process must first begin by gaining the trust of the Syrian people. No real transition can occur without accountability for crimes and justice for victims and their families. Equally, no real transition can occur without an end to the ongoing airstrikes and besiegement of civilians or in the absence of a solution for detainees and missing persons.

The undersigned organizations demand the continuation of a credible political process that is UN-led and genuinely engages Syrian civil society, who are united on the need to end the indiscriminate actions, break the sieges and secure the release of political detainees and arbitrarily-held persons. The international community must be clear that it will not allow the political process to be diverted from achieving the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people, in Sochi or elsewhere.

1. Agriculture engineering syndicate of Daraa
2. Al-Gouta Youth Volunteering Team
3. Alkawakibi Organization for Human Rights
4. Alqunaitra free Governorate Council
5. Baytna Syria
6. Daraa Bar Association
7. Daraa free Governorate Council
8. Decostamine Initiative
9. Detainees' Voice Team
10. Emergency Team in Daraa
11. Emissa for Development
12. Engineers Association - Hama
13. Family issues Directorate in Daraa
14. Free Agriculture directorate in Qunaitra
15. Free Daraa Seeds Association
16. Free Directorate of Real Estate in Daraa
17. Free Directorate of Transportations in Daraa
18. Free engineering syndicate of Daraa
19. Free Syrian Lawyers Aggregation
20. Free Syrian Writers
21. FREE-Syria Foundation
22. FSCSO
23. General Directorate of Civil Registry in Daraa and Qunaitra
24. Ghayth Charity
25. Help4Syria
26. Houran Independent Journalists
27. House Of justice in Daraa
28. Jasmine Dream Organization
29. Kawakibi Center for Transitional Justice and Human Rights
30. Kesh Malek
31. Kurds House
32. Lawadessa Center
33. Local Administration Councils Unit (LACU)
34. Local Council of Alghadir
35. Local Council of Alharra
36. Local Council of Alhirak
37. Local Council of Aljizah
38. Local Council of Alkahil
39. Local Council of Alkoum
40. Local Council of Allajat
41. Local Council of Almuhajrin
42. Local Council of Almusifra
43. Local Council of Alqahtanya
44. Local Council of Alsanamin
45. Local Council of Alsawara
46. Local Council of Alsheikh Maskin
47. Local Council of Alsheikh Saad

48. Local Council of Alshwa
49. Local Council of Ataman
50. Local Council of Beir Ajam
51. Local Council of Bousra Alsham
52. Local Council of Bouyda
53. Local Council of Busr Alharir
54. Local Council of Dael
55. Local Council of Daraa Albalad
56. Local Council of Dourwin
57. Local Council of Ebtaa
58. Local Council of Em Batnah
59. Local Council of Em Walad
60. Local Council of Enkhil
61. Local Council of Gharbya GHarya
62. Local Council of Jasim
63. Local Council of Jbab
64. Local Council of Jillin
65. Local Council of Jubata Alkhashab
66. Local Council of Karak
67. Local Council of Khan Arnaba
68. Local Council of Kharab Alshakhim
69. Local Council of Kharbit Ghazala
70. Local Council of Kodana
71. Local Council of Mashara
72. Local Council of Museika
73. Local Council of Muzirib
74. Local Council of Najih
75. Local Council of Namar
76. Local Council of Namir
77. Local Council of Nasib
78. Local Council of Nawa
79. Local Council of Qusaiba
80. Local Council of Rafid
81. Local Council of Saida
82. Local Council of Shariaa
83. Local Council of Sharqia Gharya
84. Local Council of Souesah
85. Local Council of Tafas
86. Local Council of Tal Shihab
87. Local Council of Yadoudah
88. Local Council of Zaizoun
89. Local Development and Small Projects Support (LDSPS)
90. Masar Research Center
91. Mazaya
92. Mouwatana for Civil Action
93. New Syrian Network
94. Obaida Organization

95. Office for the Documentation of Violations in the Southern Region
96. Orphans association in Nahta
97. Peace and Justice for Syria, London
98. Pro Media Group
99. Reformation Assembly in Houran
100. Rethink Rebuild Society
101. Revolutionary Council of Houran
102. Roia Organization
103. Sanad for People with Special Needs
104. Save The Rest Campaign
105. Scotland4Syria
106. Seeds increasing association in Qunaitra
107. Shahid Media Association
108. Shaml Coalition
109. Sonbola Group for Education and Development
110. Sound and Picture Organization
111. Syrian American Council
112. Syrian Association of Yorkshire
113. Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Information
114. Syrian Civil Defence (The White Helmets)
115. Syrian Concourse of Tomorrow
116. Syrian Freedom Youth for Citizenship and Secularism
117. Syrian Journalists Association (SJA)
118. Syrian Network for Human Rights
119. Syrian Nonviolence Movement
120. Syrian Revolutionary Committee
121. Syrian Society of Nottinghamshire
122. Syrian Welsh Society
123. Syrian women association for development in Qunaitra
124. Syrian Women Association Slalam
125. Syrian Women Network
126. Syrians for Truth and Justice - STJ
127. Syrische Jeugd Forum (Zaad)
128. Technical services directorate in Qunaitra
129. The Day After
130. The Syrian Authority for Sports and Youth
131. Women Now for Development
132. Working Group for Syria
133. Zaiton Magazine
134. Zenobia, Syrian Women's Association